

The President's Daily Brief

6 December 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Reaction of Europe's leaders to the Hague summit meeting is for the most part favorable. (Page 2)

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[REDACTED] North Vietnam [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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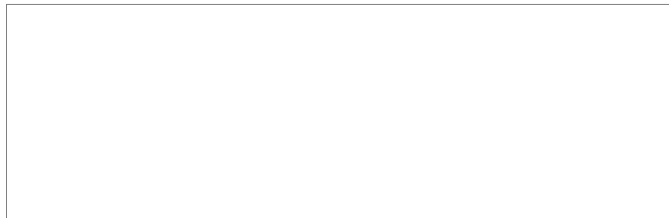
In Laos, North Vietnamese units are beginning to attack government positions near the Plaine des Jarres in greater strength, and in the northwest Pathet Lao elements have overrun several important government positions near Pak Beng. (Page 4)

The new federal offensive in Nigeria so far has not broken the military stalemate. (Page 5)

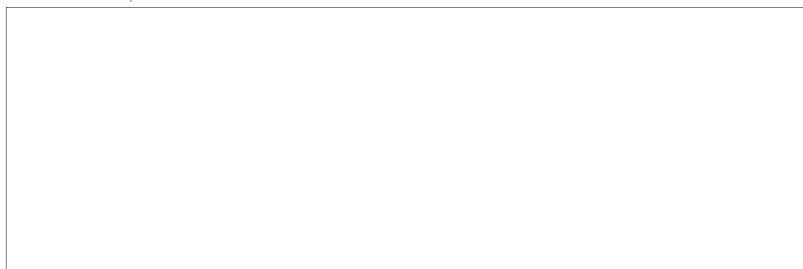
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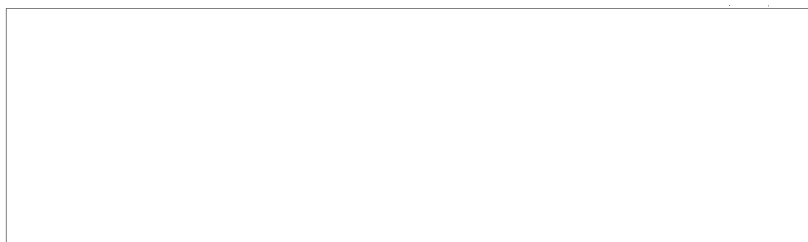
EASTERN EUROPE - GERMANY



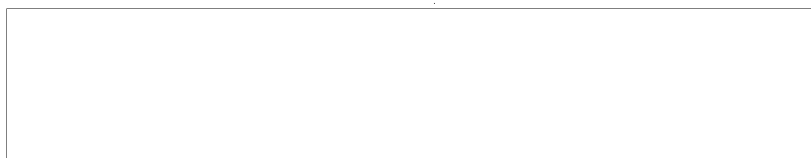
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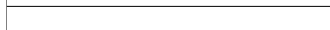
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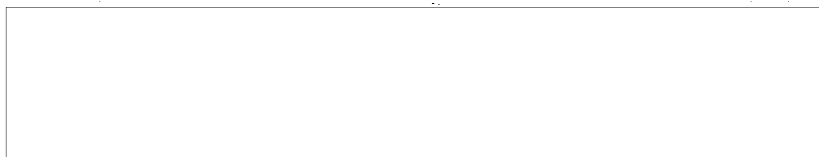
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EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Most European leaders, although fully aware of the tough problems remaining, believe the Hague summit meeting gave new impetus to European integration.

Willy Brandt, whose contribution to the meeting has been praised even by his Christian Democrat opponents, has commented that the summit justified modest expectations for moving from stagnation to greater cooperation in Europe. Brandt mentioned as the summit's primary achievement the informal agreement, not embodied in the official communiqué, that negotiations with membership applicants could begin "at the latest" by the middle of 1970.

Pompidou is said to have told the French cabinet that the summit's results were "positive," that negotiations with the British could start "quickly," and that the French want them to succeed. In the view of our embassy in Paris, Pompidou has successfully managed a major change in French European policy without the appearance of an open break with Gaullist foreign policy. His performance at the summit was hailed by nearly all French media as a triumph.

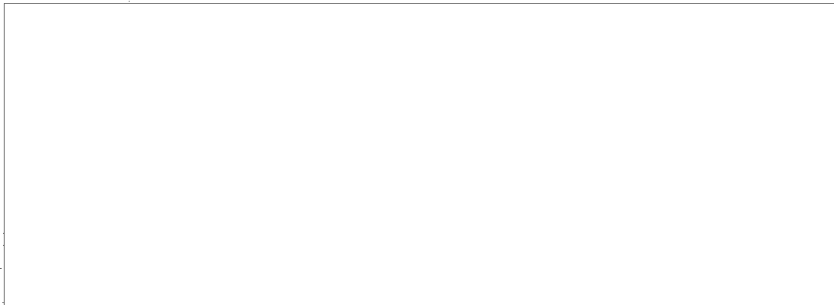
Leaders of Belgium and Luxembourg also reacted favorably to the results of the summit, but Dutch Foreign Minister Luns termed the results "just acceptable."

The British reaction has been sober. A top Foreign Office expert said that London was "reasonably pleased" with the results. He added that, although the British had hoped for an earlier date, they are convinced that the informal agreement to open negotiations by next July is a "solemn commitment."

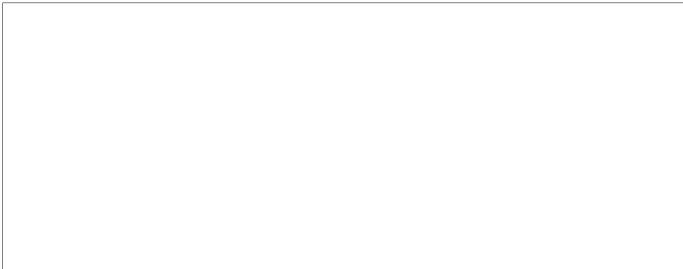
Whether this commitment can be honored remains to be seen. Brussels will be the scene of almost continual hard bargaining between now and the end of 1970. The Communities may have to stop the official clock to meet the 31 December deadline for agreement on how to finance future community activities. Difficult negotiations will also be required to achieve a common negotiating position by next July.

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NORTH VIETNAM



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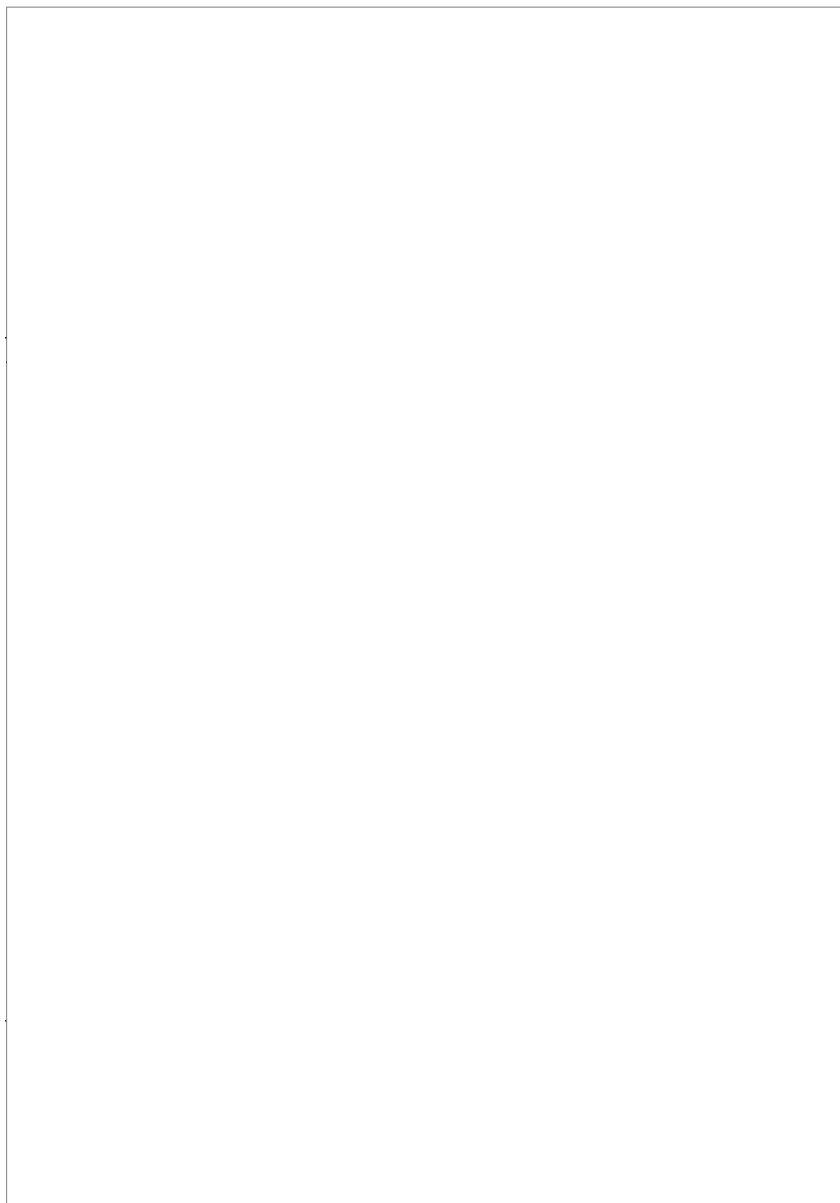
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LAOS

North Vietnamese units of battalion strength recently have carried out concerted attacks on numerous government positions near the Plaine des Jarres. Vang Pao's guerrillas have turned back most of these assaults, but their ability to stand up to sustained pressure, after many months of combat, is doubtful.

This new aggressiveness is the first clear sign that Hanoi has been able to move sufficient quantities of supplies to front-line troops in the north despite heavy bombing of the roads. [REDACTED]

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In northwestern Laos, Pathet Lao troops have overrun several important government positions near Pak Beng.

With these gains, the Pathet Lao have come close to wiping out the last vestiges of government control in the Nam Beng Valley, the site of Chinese road building activity. Photography [REDACTED] shows that the road is now motorable for about 17 miles southwest of Muong Sai.

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Southern Laos remains quiet [REDACTED]

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NOTES

Nigeria: The Biafrans have held against the first phase of the new federal offensive which began last month. The Nigerians gained some ground in the south but made no major breakthrough. Both sides suffered heavy casualties and front-line Biafran units had serious ammunition shortages. The fighting has tapered off, but secessionist field commanders expect more attacks soon by reinforced federal forces.

Haile Selassie, meanwhile, is persevering in his attempts to bring the two parties together for peace talks. The Nigerians seem willing, but the Biafrans, who have long thought the Emperor to favor the federal government, want broader talks in which African leaders, friendlier to their cause, are included.

Brazil: In a talk with Ambassador Elbrick, Foreign Minister Gibson urged early approval of Brazil's requests to buy US military equipment, particularly aircraft. He said Brazil is determined to establish a strong air force, and that it will soon have to decide where to obtain the new aircraft. The air force apparently has contracted for Italian jet trainers, and has carried on extensive negotiations for British MK55 Lightning jet fighters; this contract may soon be signed whether or not US aircraft are available. The minister added that application of sanctions against Brazil under the Conte or Symington legislation would strain US-Brazilian relations.

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